

Why Care About Dental Care For Your Pet?

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Did you know that the health of your pet's mouth directly affects overall health, quality of life, behaviour and even longevity? A healthy mouth is the gateway to a healthy pet. This is not about cosmetics. This is about a very painful, progressive disease that affects 80% of all dogs and cats by three years of age. And that "doggy" and "kitty" breath you thought was normal? It is NOT normal. It means: get your pet to your veterinarian!

Perhaps most surprising to learn is that your pet's mouth acts and reacts much like yours. You know how great your own mouth feels after a professional dental cleaning? It is no different for your pet. Now imagine if you did not care for your mouth on a daily basis until your next visit to the dentist. How healthy could your mouth be? It is no different for your pet. Every dog and cat needs professional and home care for life. Just like every human.

There are many misconceptions about what a dental cleaning actually is, about the safety of anaesthesia and the need for daily home care immediately following a dental procedure. Let me address these directly and honestly. 1) A "dental cleaning" poorly describes what takes place. The cleaning, scaling and polishing of the crowns of the teeth may only take a short time. What is vastly more important is what goes on *below the gum line*, which is why you must be sure that your veterinarian takes intra-oral dental radiographs of all teeth. Dealing with the hidden issues below the gum line will often take far longer than the cleaning of the crowns. 2) The anaesthetics that are used today are not what they used to be. By using a combination of agents (known as balanced anaesthesia) and with proper support and monitoring, anaesthetic safety has improved remarkably. If your veterinarian does a thorough pre-operative

assessment with blood tests and other appropriate diagnostics, you can feel confident that your veterinarian knows that your pet can be anaesthetized. I had my own dog anaesthetized at age 14 and will continue to do so. 3) It takes only 8 hours for new plaque to start forming so the only way to get value, benefit and improvement from the cleaning is to make sure your pet starts **healthymouth™** that very night, even better, start **healthymouth™** two weeks before the dental procedure.

My story is as follows. At age seven, my Shih-Tzu, Ping-Pong had never had a professional dental cleaning or any home care. Despite her years of bad breath I had never looked in her mouth and my former veterinarian kept saying, "just leave it alone." I then discovered that her oral disease was so painful and serious that it would surely shorten her life. Fast forward to Ping-Pong at age ten. With annual professional cleaning, I started her on **healthymouth™**. Since then she has continued her annual dental treatments, at age twelve, age fourteen and will continue yearly.

And Ping-Pong today? Her mouth is fantastic - in the best condition of her life. As a result, she is also in the best overall health of her life - like a puppy, unlike at age seven when she was an old, sad, dog. I know it is a DIRECT result of her mouth. My story should tell you that it is NEVER too late (or too early) to start dental care for your pet. I started at age ten and today our pets can live much longer lives - especially when their mouths are healthy.

But there is GREAT news too. Working with your veterinarian, you can improve and transform your pet's oral and therefore, overall health. In conjunction with **healthymouth™** dental health is the foundation for your pet's overall health just like it is for you.

Healthy Bodies Start with Healthy Mouths.™